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THE MONTHLY GULL BULLETIN

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

VOLUME 3 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, APRIL, 1921 NUMBER 4

APRIL MEETING: The next regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, 14th inst., at eight o'clock, in the Lecture Hall of the California Development Board, mezzanine floor of the Ferry Building.

Mr. Joseph Mailliard will address the Association on "The Gulls of San Francisco Bay," with lantern slide illustrations.

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APRIL FIELD TRIP will be taken on Sunday, April 17th, to Niles Canyon. San Francisco members will take Southern Pacific ferry at 8:40 a. m., and train for Niles. East Bay members will board train at First and Broadway, Oakland, at 9:12 a. m. Fare from San Francisco, $1.22, and from Oakland, $1.04 each way. Auto stages leave 12th and Clay Sts., Oakland, on the hour and half hour. Fare 54c each way. Running time one hour.

Members coming by auto should reach Niles station not later than 10 o'clock. Leader, Mr. C. R. Thomas.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE MARCH MEETING: The fiftieth regular meeting of the Association was held on March 10th, in the Ferry Building, with President Kibbe in the chair; Miss Ames acting as Recording Secretary; thirty-four members and guests in attendance.

Mr. Lastreto called attention to the proposition that the Legislature should reorganize certain State activities in such fashion that the State Fish and Game Commission would be altered beyond recognition and its work greatly hampered. After due discussion, the President was authorized to appoint a committee to draw up a resolution endorsing the work of the Commission and objecting to any change which might alter the status of the Commission or the general plan under which its activities are now conducted.

Mrs. Bertha M. Rice was accorded the privilege of the floor and spoke in favor of legislation for the protection of the toyon trees. The President was authorized to appoint a committee to investigate the question.

Dr. Harold C. Bryant, Honorary Member of the Association, delivered an entertaining and instructive lecture on "California Hawks and their Field Identification," in the course of which he presented a tentative scheme for a Field Key. In this, the hawks are classified primarily as to flight, thus:

SOARING: The vultures; eagles; rough-legged, red-tailed and Swainson hawks.

OWL-LIKE: Red-bellied hawks.

BEATING: Harrier habits; (alternate, measured, flappings and sailings); kite and marsh hawk.

DARTING, DASHING: Rapid flappings and short sailings:

Short, broad, rounded wings: sharp-shinned Cooper and gos-hawk.

Long, narrow, pointed wings: duck, sparrow and pigeon hawks; prairie falcon and osprey.

Following the determination of flight characteristics came classifications as to color; then as to size and individual peculiarities. Dr. Bryant exhibited charts showing the four typical silhouettes obtained by tracing the outlines of birds spread upon a flat surface: sparrow hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, marsh hawk and red-tail.

The proposed Key is compact and practical and the lecture was highly appreciated by all listeners.

Immediately after the lecture, the Board of Directors elected the following persons to membership: Miss Olive Burroughs, Oakland; Mrs. Harriette W. Bridges and Mrs. Mary Warrington, Berkeley; Mrs. Edith H. Lyon, Miss Florence Nickelsburg and Mr. Louis Rapp, Jr., San Francisco.

THE QUAIL AS A GAME BIRD

Excerpt from a statement by Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audubon Societies, commenting upon the proposition that the quail should be accorded the legal status of a "song bird" and be given absolute protection.

The National Association of Audubon Societies does not advocate the placing of the Quail on the "songbird list," and this is the attitude it has always held. As historic evidence of the fact that we regard this bird as strictly a game bird I may mention that in the old "Model Law" prepared by the American Ornithologists' Union, and which as a result of campaigns instituted by workers of this Association, was adopted in forty-one States, the group of birds to which the Quail belongs is specially declared to be game birds. In most States this bill was known as the Audubon bill and in many places today is known as the Audubon Law.

If the ordinary safeguards thrown around a game bird, such as bag limit, limited shooting season, non-sale, and other usual precautions do not prove sufficient in preventing the numbers of the species from becoming unduly depleted then it should be protected by a closed season of a few years' duration in order to allow the bird to recuperate in numbers.

A law placing the Quail on the songbird list, or in other words giving it perpetual closed season, is likely to have a tendency to defeat the very object for which the bill was enacted. The class of people that has taken most interest in this bird in the United States is the organized sportsmen. In many States these bodies, representing thousands of good, worth-while citizens, in order to perpetuate their opportunities to go afield with gun and dog, have expended much time and large sums of money in feeding Quail during periods of heavy snows and have also been responsible for the introduction of tens of thousands of Quail for the purpose of restocking depleted coveys. Many of these organizations are also active in apprehending and reporting those who kill the Quail by illegal methods or at unseasonable times.

It is my opinion that especially in many of the northern and central States the Quail today would be almost as rare as the Passenger Pigeon if it had not been for the efforts of the Game Protective organizations of sportsmen who have long been the chief active force in securing and encouraging the enforcement of laws for its preservation. If in attempting to protect Quail the bird is removed for all time from the list of birds that may ever be hunted, you virtually take from it the solicitous protective influences of the one large class of our citizens that has done most for its protection in the past.

My experience has been that in most instances the fortunes of the Quail may with a fair degree of safety be left in the hands of the game protective associations who have an intense personal interest in the preservation of the species.

T. Gilbert Pearson.

THE SACRAMENTO RIVER IN APRIL

At a time like the present, the Sacramento River above the capital city traverses a veritable paradise for birds. The writer enjoyed a trip on the 3rd instant, by steamer, from Colusa to Knight's Landing. The river is still at a high stage, and the innumerable sharp bends make this trip one constant tribute to the skill of the pilot. Now you are racing along with the current, all shipshape, head foremost. Suddenly the stream makes a turn around a corner, but the steamer does not. The engines are put full speed astern, and the current carries her slowly, but surely, right into the bank, and holds her there. Leisurely she edges away, and starts down-stream broadside on. By some magic, the pilot induces her to twist into position and keep it until the next bend is reached. The point of all this is that when the steamer is trying to climb the bank, there are no birds at hand, and the only time you have to observe them is when you are racing at top speed. Not a bird on the river but what despises the boat and tries to avoid it.

California gulls soared about overhead. A few white pelicans crossed our bow, with nuptial crests and mandible horns; a flock was swimming around one of the many wet areas while another manoeuvred overhead, far away. We almost passed a lone baldpate before he took fright and flew away in panic. Great blue herons were many and several black-crowned night herons flew ahead of us. Many Anthony green herons, in pairs and singly, belied their common name and tried to beat us *down* the river. The males were in high plumage and strikingly blue-gray on the back. It was only when alighting that they stretched their heads out and one could see the deep rufous necks and dark crests.

Stilts and yellow-legs strutted around little shallow ponds which still remain where the bulk of the waters has subsided. Turkey vultures, sharp-shinned and sparrow hawks battled the high wind, with larger hawks, but the latter did not submit to identification. Now and then a kingfisher or a flicker would cross the river ahead, while magpies played around the levees or in the fields. The only black phoebe seen was perched on the draw pier of Meridian bridge. California jays, crows, bicolored black-birds, meadow-larks and Brewer blackbirds were sprinkled all along the way. Linnets were singing, of course, and one was so bright red that he looked like a tropic flower on a scraggly bare tree.

A few brown and one solitary Sacramento towhees came into view. Tree and cliff swallows played about everywhere, but were very wary. One shrike was spied; a warbling vireo sang for us and one wren-tit piped his lay at a distance. Robins were spied at times. Too distant for identification, other ducks were seen in the sloughs and lingering ponds. The fascinating moving picture came to rest at six o'clock, when the autos were put ashore at Knight's Landing and thereafter the only notable feature was a little burrowing owl standing vigil on a fence post just below Woodland.

A. S. Kibbe.

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THE BIRDS OF CALIFORNIA

Within the month past, Mr. William Leon Dawson has made concrete demonstration of the treatment adopted by him for his work on the above title. The books are to be issued in 64-page parts, of which the first two have been delivered to subscribers. The completed work will comprise thirty or thirty-two of such parts. Comparing the essential features of the three editions, it would appear that the text and illustrations printed therein are identical in all editions, making somewhat more than eighteen hundred pages with over one thousand half-tone cuts.

Students' Edition: Pages 7¾ x 10⅜. 15 colored plates. 3 volumes similar to Game Birds of California. 4 lbs. each. Price $1 per part. Binding optional and extra.

Booklovers'. Edition: Pages same. 48 colored plates. 15 photogravures. Heavier paper, making 4 volumes about 4½ lbs. each. Price, $2 per part. Binding optional and extra.

Editions de Luxe: Pages 9½ x 12½. 90 colored plates. 30 photogravures. 30 full-page photographs. Making four quarto volumes, much heavier. Price, $5 per part. Binding optional and extra.

Address, The Birds of California Publishing Co., Santa Barbara, Calif.

Typographically, the first issues give excellent promise. The treatment consists of the better part of a page of the usual technical data, followed by life histories of considerable extent, with many interesting illustrations. The classification is *sui generis*, and will make reference to specific birds rather dependent upon the index. Parts are to be issued at the rate of eight to twelve per year.

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MARCH FIELD TRIP was taken on Sunday, March 13th, to Lagunitas Lake, via Ross and Lake Phoenix. The day was overcast and not especially propitious for bird observation, as witness the familiar names lacking from the list, but it was fine for walking and those who ignored the weather signs felt amply repaid for their hardihood. The usual route was followed, reaching the lunching place at the foot of the lake soon enough for the hungriest but not too early for anyone. After lunch, the lake was circled and the party reached Ross on the return at 4:30 p. m.

The outstanding event was the observation of the White-throated Sparrow, feeding on dandelion buds at close range for ten or fifteen minutes, on the lawn of the first house northerly from Ross station and just east of the creek.

Birds encountered on the bay were: Western grebe, glaucous-winged, western and California gulls; Farallon and Brandt cormorants, canvas-back, scaup, surf scoter, and great blue heron. Land birds: turkey vulture, red-tail hawk, kingfisher and flicker; Anna and rufous hummers, black phoebe, California jay, crows and meadowlark; golden-crowned and white-throated sparrow, Sierra junco, song sparrow and San Francisco towhee; Hutton vireo, lutescent warbler, Vigors wren, titmouse and ruby-crowned kinglet; dwarf hermit thrush, robin and varied thrush. Thirty-three species.

Members in attendance were Mesdames Burke, Kelly, Reygadas and Warrington; Miss Pierce; Messrs. Kibbe, Rapp and Thomas. As guests, Messrs. Baker, Robert Ballard and Carroll Wholey. Eight members and three guests.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

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Meets second Thursday of each month in Lecture Room of California Development Board, Ferry Building, San Francisco.

Every one welcome. Active Membership, $3.00 per year, including Bulletin. Address Bulletin correspondence to President.

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